

I. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of ~~analysing~~ pretreating a nucleic acid sample obtained from a site, prior to analysis of the sample comprising the step of pretreating the sample to remove or inactivate contaminating nucleic acids originating from the site.

Claim 2 (original): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), ribonucleic acid (RNA), locked nucleic acid (LNA) or protein nucleic acid (PNA).

Claim 3 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is particularly well adapted for amplification via PCR or some other amplification process.

Claim 4 (original): A method according to claim 3 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is an amplicon derived from a PCR or another DNA amplification process.

Claim 5 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is degradation resistant.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is synthetic.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the pre- treatment

comprises treating the sample to preferentially remove or inactivate nucleic acids that are free or substantially free from other cell components.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A method according to claim 7 wherein the pre-treatment is one or more treatments selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of: (i) enzymic treatments; (ii) physical treatments; and (iii) chemical treatments.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A method according to claim 8 wherein the enzymic treatments comprise contacting the sample with DNAses, RNAses, exonucleases and/or ~~25~~ endonucleases.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): A method according to claim 8 wherein the physical treatments comprise centrifugation, washing, filtration and/or chromatography such as gel filtration chromatography.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): A method according to claim 8 wherein the chemical treatments comprise the use of sodium hydroxide, sodium hypochlorite, sodium metabisulphite or ammonium metabisulphite, detergents and/or proprietary products designed to remove nucleic acids from surfaces.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 wherein the method of ~~analysing~~ pretreating a the nucleic acid sample is PCR, mitochondrial DNA sequencing, single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) analysis ~~and~~ or low copy number PCR.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the pre-treatment comprises removing cell bound contaminating nucleic acids from the sample.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13 wherein the cell bound

contaminating nucleic acid is particularly well adapted for amplification via PCR or some other amplification process.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is of bacterial origin.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method according to claim 15 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is from bacteria engineered to contain at least one multicopy plasmid comprising at least one amplicon.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method according to claim 13 wherein the cell bound contaminating nucleic acid is removed by exposing ~~the~~ nucleic acid in the cells and then removing the nucleic acid.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method according to claim 17 wherein ~~the~~ nucleic acid is exposed by lysing the cells.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method according to claim ~~17~~ wherein ~~the nucleic acid is removed using the pre-treatment steps of claim 7~~ 1 wherein the pre-treatment comprises removing cell bound contaminating nucleic acids from the sample by exposing nucleic acid in the cells and then removing the nucleic acid, and wherein nucleic acid is removed using the pre-treatment step comprising treating the sample to preferentially remove or inactivate nucleic acids that are free or substantially free from other cell components.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): A nucleic acid analysis kit comprising a means to remove a nucleic acid contaminant from a sample to be subjected to analysis.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): A kit according to claim 20 wherein said means comprises a labelled probe adapted to bind to the contaminant and thus aid in its removal.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A kit according to claim 20 wherein said means comprises an enzyme or chemical that can be added to the sample and inactivate or remove the contaminant preferentially or selectively relative to a target nucleic acid.

Claims 23-42 (canceled)